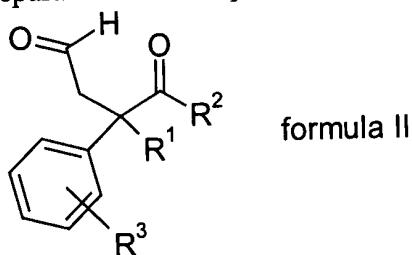


WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A process for the preparation of a compound of the formula II:

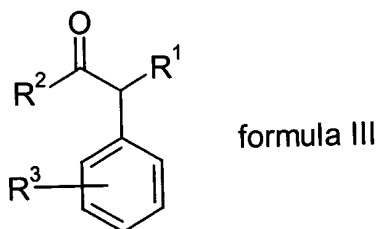


wherein

R¹ is hydrogen, (C₁-C₆)alkyl, (C₁-C₆)alkoxy, (C₁-C₆)alkylthio;

R² is phenyl, naphthyl or (C₃-C₁₂)cycloalkyl substituted with one or two substituents selected from the group consisting of hydrogen (C₁-C₆)alkyl, (C₁-C₆)alkoxy, (C₁-C₆)alkylthio, (C₂-C₆)alkenyl, (C₂-C₆)alkynyl, (C₁-C₆)alkylhalo, (C₃-C₈)cycloalkyl, (C₃-C₈)cycloalkenyl or halo;

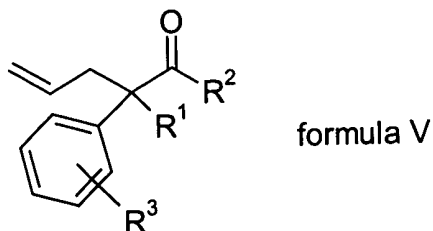
R³ is selected from the group consisting of hydrogen, (C₁-C₆)alkyl, (C₁-C₆)alkoxy, (C₁-C₆)alkylthio, (C₂-C₆)alkenyl, (C₂-C₆)alkynyl, (C₁-C₆)alkylhalo, (C₃-C₈)cycloalkyl, (C₃-C₈)cycloalkenyl or halo, comprising,
treating a compound of formula III



wherein R¹, R² and R³ are described as above, with a suitable base and a compound of formula IV:



wherein X is a suitable leaving group, to provide the compound of formula V



and oxidizing the compound of formula V with a suitable oxidizing agent to provide the compound of formula II.

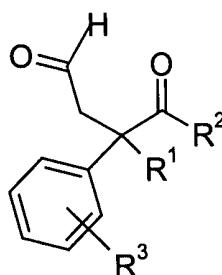
2. A process according to claim 1 wherein
 R^1 is CH_3 ;
 R^2 is cyclohexyl; and
 R^3 is hydrogen.

3. A process according to claim 2 wherein
X is Br or Cl.

4. A process according to claim 3 wherein the suitable oxidizing agent is ozone.

5. A process according to claim 4 wherein the suitable base is potassium tert-butoxide.

6. A compound of the formula:



wherein

R^1 is hydrogen, $(\text{C}_1\text{-C}_6)\text{alkyl}$, $(\text{C}_1\text{-C}_6)\text{alkoxy}$, $(\text{C}_1\text{-C}_6)\text{alkylthio}$;

R^2 is phenyl, naphthyl or $(\text{C}_3\text{-C}_{12})\text{cycloalkyl}$ substituted with one or two substituents selected from the group consisting of hydrogen $(\text{C}_1\text{-C}_6)\text{alkyl}$, $(\text{C}_1\text{-C}_6)\text{alkoxy}$, $(\text{C}_1\text{-C}_6)\text{alkylthio}$;

C₆)alkylthio, (C₂-C₆)alkenyl, (C₂-C₆)alkynyl, (C₁-C₆)alkylhalo, (C₃-C₈)cycloalkyl, (C₃-C₈)cycloalkenyl or halo;

R³ is selected from the group consisting of hydrogen, (C₁-C₆)alkyl, (C₁-C₆)alkoxy, (C₁-C₆)alkylthio, (C₂-C₆)alkenyl, (C₂-C₆)alkynyl, (C₁-C₆)alkylhalo, (C₃-C₈)cycloalkyl, (C₃-C₈)cycloalkenyl or halo.

7. A compound according to claim 6 wherein

R¹ is CH₃;

R² is cyclohexyl; and

R³ is hydrogen.